FE Week

HOT NEWS FE Week ANALYSIS AND JOBS

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Monday, October 14, 2013
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Conservative MP Caroline Dinenage reads *FE Week* outside the House of a Commons ahead of a parliamentary debate on levels of adult literacy and numeracy. See page 3

Picture by Nick Linford




See pages 12 and 13

inside...

# Minister attacks FE for ‘giving up’

*Paul Offord*
*@PaulOfford*

Further education leaders have lined up to defend the sector after Liberal Democrat Schools Minister David Laws claimed new figures “exposed” colleges for allowing learners to “give up” maths and English.

Figures published for the first time by the Department for Education (DfE) show almost three-quarters of school students who achieved an English GCSE grade D, and two-thirds who achieved a maths GCSE grade D, were not re-entered for the exam.

Mr Laws said: “Colleges and [school] sixth forms should be clear with their students that these are essential subjects and must be continued.

“These figures expose the vast number of young people allowed to give up these subjects after so nearly achieving the level employers demand.

“With just a bit more teaching, these students could have achieved the grades that would make all the difference to their job prospects.”

A DfE spokesperson added the figures underlined why the government now insisted all post-16 education providers must teach English and maths to young people who fail to achieve C grades in their GCSEs.

But Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive at the Association of Colleges, was quick to highlight school sixth forms were also in the frame, telling *FE Week*: “The statistics confirm more than 100,000 16-year-olds who don’t get GCSE at grade C in maths or English at school do not then reach this grade in their two years in sixth form.”

He added: “Many colleges dropped GCSE retake courses in the last decade because of low pass rates.

“The new funding condition and the new emphasis on core skills in study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships makes this a priority for colleges which is why they are taking action across a broad front, including recruiting, re-deploying and retraining teachers and informing and educating students.”

Others also pointed out that it was “wrong” to imply learners were no longer studying English and maths.

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the 157 Group, told *FE Week*: “For many, the key to success in English and maths lies in contextualised study [such as functional skills qualifications] rather than simply resitting the GCSEs that perhaps did not inspire them at school.

“It is wrong to imply that students are not making progress in English and maths just because they are not resitting their GCSE exams.”

The point was echoed by David Hughes, chief executive of National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, who said: “We can take them [learners] to water but we can’t make them drink — so the challenge all too often is to motivate them and engage them in different ways to school.

“That takes creativity, time and skill from the teaching workforce and we believe that there is a need to review the funding available to support what can be a tough challenge.”

And Mike Hopkins, chief executive of the Middlesbrough/Gateshead College Confederation told *FE Week*: “I would estimate that 20 per cent of the FE budget is spent on deficiency. This is not the fault of students and so until professionals and government face up to their responsibilities, we’ll witness a horrible loss of potential.”

Mr Laws’ comments the same day Conservative Skills Minister Matthew Hancock appeared to suggest in the House of Commons that schools should take responsibility for numeracy and literacy failings.

Reflecting on the Organisation for Economic Co-operaton and Development’s damning report on skills in England and Northern Ireland, Mr Hancock said: “We have learned that, above all else, alone in the developed world, our 16 to 24-year olds are not better educated in English and maths than those aged 55 to 65.

“Yes, money is important in solving the problem, but money alone is not the answer.

“Expectations, rigour and challenge matter too. The solution will not happen quickly. It takes years to turn around schools, but then it takes years for those turned around schools to educate the next generation.”

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*Edition 78*

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## Top adult numeracy and literacy debate tweets:

**@cj_dinenage**
Looking forward to leading my first debate in the Chamber of the House of Commons later today about adult literacy & numeracy

**@NIACE_CarolT**
debate in Commons about how to drive up literacy and numeracy - good to see role of family learning prominent

**@OECD_Edu**
Age is strongly related to proficiency in literacy and numeracy

**@SchleicherEDU**
Immigration and language background are strongly associated with proficiency in literacy and numeracy

**@BarrySheerman**
Good non partisan debate on adult literacy & numeracy hope Minister can be balanced in his wind up

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# Foundation announces first round of tenders



*Paul Offord*
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The Education and Training Foundation has released its first invitations to tender under a new competitive bidding process.

A total of four contracts are up for grabs — three concerning professional standards for teachers and trainers in England and the fourth about a workforce survey.

It comes a week after a letter from the foundation's interim chief executive Peter Davies and interim chair David Hughes (pictured) was posted on its website saying contract bids made under its old non-competitive process had been binned.

A foundation spokesperson said: "As part of our commitment to open and transparent ways of working, we have released four invitations to tender.

"Three of these will enable us to progress the review of the professional standards for teachers and trainers in England, as outlined in our delivery plan including to lead the consultation to inform the review of professional standards; establish the set of professional standards, following the review; and, develop guidance for teachers and trainers on the use of the professional standards.

"The fourth invitation to tender focuses on the workforce survey."

She added: "Specifically the [fourth] invitation is for suppliers to design and deliver a consultation regarding the workforce survey, so we can ensure that this meets the data and reporting needs of the sector."

Sue Dutton, foundation interim lead for professional standards, teaching, learning and assessment, said: "These are significant pieces of work. One of the priorities identified in our delivery plan is the review of the professional standards for teachers, trainers and tutors.

"The standards play a key role in supporting the professionalisation of the FE and skills workforce, underpinning both initial teacher training and continuing professional development."

Other contracts that could be offered to bidders in the coming months involve traineeship and apprenticeship support programmes.

The changes to the tendering process followed news that £75,000-worth of contracts had been awarded to organisations, such as the Association of Colleges and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, through the foundation's non-competitive process. It is understood these contracts will remain in place.

Bids for the workforce survey are due by October 18 and for professional standards for teachers and trainers by October 23 — the same date bids for specification for the development of professional standards for teachers and trainers in England are due. Bids for work on guidance for the use of professional standards for teachers and trainers are due by October 28. Email tenderqueries@etfoundation.co.uk for more details.

# Prison shortfalls

Ofsted FE and skills director Matthew Coffey has delivered a damning verdict on prison education and training in England and Wales.

In a speech on Thursday at London's Wormwood Scrubs prison he pointed out how 65 per cent of the 78 prisons inspected since 2009 had failed to achieve at least a good grading.

"None was outstanding. Eleven were inadequate — that's nearly 15 per cent," he said.

Weaknesses, said Mr Coffey, included poor attendance, poor punctuality, weak careers information and advice, poor quality teaching, and vocational qualifications that were "too low".

He added: "Far too few prisoners enter prison and then leave it able to calculate a weekly budget, complete a simple work log book or follow written instructions on a work schedule.

"Data from initial assessments have shown that, in some prisons, about 75 per cent of prisoners' English and maths skills are assessed to be below the equivalent of a GCSE at grade C — 50 per cent do not have the skills expected of an 11-year-old."

Mr Coffey went on to make six recommendations on prisoner rehabilitation and the 123 prisons that come under Ofsted's inspection remit.

They included making prisoners gain English and maths qualifications, giving prison governors more responsibility for education and training, setting prisoners vocational and employment-related skills targets at level two and above.

He also called for incentives, such as the tax credit recommendation currently being looked at by the government for apprenticeships, to thos who train and employ ex-offenders.

# SFA warned about its unpaid traineeship post

*Rebecca Cooney*
*@RebeccaKCooney*

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has been warned about "exploiting" young people, after it advertised an unpaid traineeship vacancy which could last up to six months.

The agency posted the advert on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching website.

It was for a business admin trainee, as part of the government's new traineeships scheme, where learners complete work experience alongside English, maths and employability training.

Tom Wilson, director of Unionlearn, the teaching arm of the TUC, acknowledged the potential benefits of traineeships, but warned they could be exploitative.

He said: "Looking at the advertisement for the unpaid traineeship at the SFA, it appears trainees will have to do a wide range of tasks which will be of value to the employer, without receiving any pay.

"Traineeships can be a useful route towards an apprenticeship or job, but they must be high quality.

"Trainees should gain a realistic experience of work, including proper pay for work carried out.

"The TUC is concerned unpaid traineeships risk exploiting trainees, without improving their job prospects, and displacing existing staff."

The advert stated the trainee would be expected to work at least 21 hours a week for up to six months.

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It gave the hours as Monday to Thursday, from 9.30am to 4.30pm, with Wednesdays spent doing off-the-job training with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.

The notice also made it clear the role was unpaid, but the trainee may be able to receive a bursary to help with travel expenses.

Applications closed on September 20 with interviews to take place the following week.

A possible start date given as last week.

The advert added the traineeship would last up to six months, the maximum allowed under the traineeship rules.

The trainee would be expected to perform duties such as data entry, sending emails, scanning, filing, shredding and postal duties.

A spokesperson for the agency said: "There is no expectation for employers to pay young people taking part in traineeships.

"Students undertaking a work placement, as part of a traineeship, are exempt from any national minimum wage entitlement."

The spokesperson added the agency could not guarantee the trainee would be offered an apprenticeship, or a job when the traineeship ended.

But along with the provider, it would "see what progression opportunities could be identified and facilitated".

The learner would gain "improved skills and an enhanced CV with purposeful learning activities within a real workplace setting, giving the learner a "greater chance of competing successfully" when applying for jobs elsewhere.

The training branch of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce declined to comment.

An Access Training advert on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service website — which advertised an unpaid warehousing traineeship with Newcastle Council — was pulled following complaints from unions.

A Newcastle Council spokesperson said the advert had been put up in error by Access Training and it had not intended to be the employers in the arrangement.

The spokesperson added: ""Clearly we would like to explore every opportunity to provide entry to work experience for as many people as possible.

"But our concern would include fair remuneration for any work undertaken during extended work experience."

# MP 'desperately sad' over numeracy and literacy failings

*Paul Offord*
*@PaulOfford*






Poor adult numeracy and literacy levels in England and Northern Ireland were the subject of a House of Commons debate.

It was prompted by findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which warned of some of the highest proportions of adults scoring at or below level one — the lowest possible level — in numeracy, where adults can only perform basic mathematical processes.

It stated: "In fact, 24.1 per cent of adults, around 8.5 million people, scored at that level, compared to the average [among participating countries from across the world] of 19 per cent."

Tory MP Caroline Dinenage (pictured), who secured the Commons debate on Thursday, said: "I am angry, frustrated and desperately sad that we have failed so many generations over this issue."

The OECD report further indicated that around 16.4 per cent of adults, or around 5.8 million people, in England and Northern Ireland scored at level one or below in literacy, which is closer to the average of 15.5 per cent of adults among all participating countries.

At level one in literacy, adults can only read brief information on familiar topics.

England was also the only country surveyed where the oldest age group (55 to 65) had higher proficiency in literacy and numeracy than the youngest group (16 to 24).

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock told fellow MPs: "It was a shocking report and it will reverberate down through the education debate in Britain for many years.

"I hope it will persuade many who are sceptical or resistant to the reforms being put in place to come onside and support more rigour, and support stronger maths and English within schools."

He also announced the launch of a programme to produce more FE maths teachers. It is understood the programme would involve the retraining up to 600 existing FE teachers by the end of the current academic year.

They would cater for thousands of extra pupils now expected to have to study maths at college because they had failed to achieve at least a C grade for GCSE, or equivalent qualification.

"Of course, good teaching of English and maths requires good English and maths teachers, so we are today announcing new Department for Education support for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths to develop a maths enhancement programme to upskill existing teachers of maths in further education," added Mr Hancock.

Labour MP Barry Sheerman (pictured) said there would be no easy solutions to improving numeracy and literacy.

He said: "It is something that has evaded all governments from all parties for a considerable length of time."

# Shortlisted college eyes-up degrees

*Paul Offord*
*@PaulOfford*

One of the eight organisations shortlisted to take over the troubled K College has told *FE Week* it is only interested in taking on higher education provision.

Canterbury College is one of eight colleges and training providers that has been invited to bid for provision delivered by the Kent college.

But it has revealed it is only looking to take on K College's higher education programmes.

"Canterbury College has a newly-opened, purpose built higher education centre and is keen to ensure there are suitable opportunities for learners in Kent to progress to higher education," a spokesperson told *FE Week*.

"Hence the college is making a bid for the higher education provision currently delivered by K College."

Nine organisations had been asked to develop their bids to take over provision at K College. They had been whittled down from 30 organisations, including colleges and private firms, who sent the Skills Funding Agency a total of 87 expressions of interest (EIs).

One of the organisations has since pulled out, but, other than Canterbury College, those still in competition are East Kent College, Mid Kent College, Hadlow College, Portsmouth's Highbury College, Ixion Group Contracts Ltd, SEETEC Business Technology Centre Ltd and NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group).

They all declined to comment on their possible tenders, although an NCG spokesperson insisted the 250-mile distance between its HQ and K College would not be a problem as it was already a national training provider.

K College was formed following a merger between West Kent College and South Kent College in 2010, but ran up at least £15m in debt to the agency, which has issued it with a notice of concern.

Phil Frier, who became interim principal of the college in January following the resignation of former principal Mr Fearon, has conceded the merger failed.

The agency has declined to say whether K College debts would be transferred to the winning bidder.

The Canterbury College spokesperson said: "We are very mindful of the need to safeguard our own finances and other resources, and do not wish to jeopardise our own position and that of our students and staff.

"The college will therefore not be bidding for any of K College's campuses, or for other FE funding contracts that come with various high levels of bank loans and other debt."

Seven parts of the college's provision are on offer, including 16 to 19 provision in Dover, Folkestone or Ashford, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells grouped together and 19+ provision in these three areas.

Higher Education Funding Council for England directly-funded provision at Ashford and Tonbridge is also up for grabs.

The first, EI, stage of the tendering process was initially supposed to have been completed in August.

But it was delayed by the agency "in order to allow organisations to better prepare their tenders" as many organisations would be closed over the summer, according to an email sent to interested bodies.

That resulted in the second stage of the process, where invitations to tender (ITT) were due to be sent out by the agency between July and September, being pushed back.

However, the delay should not prevent contracts from being awarded on time, an agency spokesperson told *FE Week* in July. They said: "Contracts will continue to be awarded in line with the indicative timetable we have set out."

The short-listed organisations who have made through to the ITT stage are due give presentations and attend interviews on their bids this month with contracts being awarded the following two months.

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# Ex-Dragon Theo gets Skills Show countdown under way

*Shane Mann*
*@ShaneRMann*

Media partner of tThe Skills Show

The final countdown to The Skills Show 2013 was officially marked at one of London's most iconic landmarks — St Mary's Axe, more widely known as The Gherkin. last Tuesday (8 October).

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock and former Dragons' Den investor Theo Paphitis launched the show countdown with a call to 'inspire a new generation of young people to consider opportunities in skills, vocational careers and apprenticeships'.

The Skills Show takes place at the Birmingham NEC and is billed as is the UK's largest skills and careers event.

In its second year, up to 75,000 people, including primary and secondary school children, FE students and adult learners, are expected to attend the event, which covers an area equivalent to the size of seven football pitches.

Distinguished guests from across industry and the skills sector, had the opportunity to devour delicious breakfast-style canapés at the countdown launch, on Tuesday, October 8, and take in the panoramic views of London's skyline. They also got to try their hands at new skills.

This included, for example, students from Barking and Dagenham College who hosted an animation 'Have-a-Go'. Using the latest software, Joseph O'Connor, from Rainham, and Phillip Newberry, from Harold Hill, guided participants through the process of producing their own stop motion animation.

Both Mr Hancock and Skills Show patron Mr Paphitis created their own stop motion animation (pictured, bottom left).

Capel Manor College also had guests using their creative skills by having a go at making floral pin-hole badges. Mr Hancock, along with TV personality and landscape gardener Tommy Walsh got stuck in and made their own (pictured centre, top row).

Mr Hancock said: "The Skills Show is an amazing showcase for the vast variety of skills we have in this country, we need to champion our skills and inspire young people to make their own mark on industries ranging from engineering to web design. Creating a highly skilled nation will support our economy, safeguard our industries and improve the prospects of Britain."

Mr Paphitis said: "I am passionate about improving skills levels across the UK, not least because our economy needs a skilled workforce to ensure we can be competitive and continue to develop and expand. Business needs to attract the very best talent in order to succeed, and The Skills Show is a great way for organisations to showcase the opportunities which are available to young people as they enter the world of work."

The launch also marked the start of The Skills Show Roadshow. Working in partnership with National Express, a Skills Show branded coach will go to 15 UK landmarks during October half-term to raise awareness of the show.



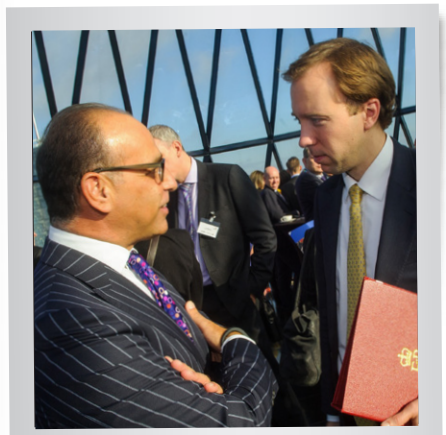
Skills Show patron Theo Paphitis speaks at the launch




The Skills Show-branded coach that will tour the UK during the October half-term in partnership with National Express

## SKILLS SHOW 2013 FACTFILE

- From November 14 to 16 at Birmingham NEC
- More than 60 World Skills UK national competition finals will be held at the show, which involve more than 600 competitors
- Up to 75,000 visitors are expected over the three-day show
- More than 25,000 items of equipment will be used in the completion finals
- The Skills Show covers an area of 60,000 square meters — equivalent to seven football pitches
- More than 200,000 cups of tea will be sipped



Skills Show patron Theo Paphitis and Skills Minister Matthew Hancock catch up following speeches



Matthew Hancock and TV personality and landscape gardener Tommy Walsh have a go at making floral pin-hole badges with Capel Manor College



Theo Paphitis is presented with his pin-hole badge from Capel Manor College



Theo Paphitis and Matthew Hancock take part in a stop-motion animation 'Have-a-Go' from Barking and Dagenham College



The Skills Show chair Carole Stott MBE formally opens the countdown event



Matthew Hancock speaks on the importance of skills at the launch

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## Editor's comment

### FE — don't wait to be told

Schools Minister David Laws clearly had the "post-16 education" sector in his cross-hairs when he said government figures "exposed" "vast numbers" of learners being "allowed to give up".

And while this includes school sixth forms, clearly colleges are in the frame for the bulk of his criticism. But was he right?

What Mr Laws fails to point out is second chance learners typically study functional skills and before that key skills, as opposed to GCSEs.

However, that does not mean colleges are completely off the hook if you agree that an A* to C grade at GCSE is more valuable to the work prospects of an FE learner than an equivalent non-GCSE qualification.

If the lack of an A* to C grade at GCSE really is a barrier, and you only have to look at an increasing number of apprenticeship adverts with pre-entry criteria to see that it is, then colleges do need a rethink.

That rethink should not be just because the funding rules are changing, but because, like it or not, it will improve the life chances of learners.

If that means learners study contextualised functional skills to stay engaged and learning, and then sit the GCSE exam to claim the currency of a certificate, then so be it.

**Nick Linford, editor**

## Correction

Not a working day goes by when we're not writing about the FE and skills sector's acronym-adopting bodies including, for example, associations, agencies and institutes.

So for ease of reading we try to call them just that after first mention. For example, you'd get the Association of School and College Leaders at first, then the association upon further mention.

The spanner in the works is when we need to differentiate because there are, for example, two associations in one story.

In the case above we would write ASCL on second mention, having put the acronym in brackets directly after first mention.

Whatever, key is writing these bodies' names out in full at first mention. We didn't get that right in a page 2 story last week on traineeships.

**Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week?***

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.




# Minister writes to new apprentices on pay

*Rebecca Cooney*

*@RebeccaKCooney*

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock has written a letter for every apprentice telling them what they should be earning — despite hundreds of adverts for underpaying apprenticeships remaining on a government-funded website.

The letter, which will be distributed to apprentices starting from October 1 by providers, outlines the minimum wage for 16 to 18-year-olds as £2.68 an-hour.

Mr Hancock's message says: "Your employer will support your training and pay you at least the hourly National Minimum Wage."

It comes with the government's Apprenticeship Pay Survey having recently been released, showing 29 per cent of the 5,635 apprentices were underpaid in 2012, a jump of 9 percentage points on the year before.

Meanwhile, underpaying apprenticeships are still being advertised on the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website, even after *FE Week* highlighted the problem to the Skills Funding Agency, which runs NAS.

More than 600 jobs were being advertised on the website earlier this month paying £2.65 an hour— the minimum rate before October 1 increase. And many were still on the website almost a week later.

However, an agency spokesperson said: "We have put measures in place to ensure all new vacancies being posted adhere to the increased apprenticeship national minimum wage rate, of at least £2.68 per hour.

"We have written to all training organisations and employers reminding them of the new rate.

"We are currently in the process of contacting any training organisations and employers where we have identified adverts, posted before October 1, that are still displaying the old rate.

"To date we have experienced good co-operation on this matter from our training organisations and employers, and they are in the process of changing the rates online."

The government's Apprenticeship Pay Survey echoed the findings of the Low Pay Commission's 2013 report published in April, which found that a similar number — just over 27 per cent — of all apprentices were underpaid.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "These findings are shocking and show how many apprentices are currently seen as little more than cheap labour."

Some industries had even higher percentages of apprentices not getting their full entitlement.

In childcare, underpayment was up 65 per cent on the previous year, while 69 per cent of hairdressing apprentices were underpaid.

An agency update to providers sent out on Wednesday said Mr Hancock's letter was in response to the April report, and told providers to ensure the letter was issued "to all new apprentices starting on or after 1 October 2013" — excluding higher apprentices, who are covered by separate regulations.

The letter explains what wage entitlements are for apprentices in each age category, and gives the number of the pay and work rights helpline.

An agency spokesperson told *FE Week* it would be monitoring whether providers were giving out the letter through its relationship teams.

She added: "We would expect training organisations and employers to want to do this so they can ensure that the apprentices they have just taken on have the information they need on their pay and benefits."

And Mr Hancock himself is setting a good example, paying his apprentice well above the minimum wage at £6.31 an-hour.

His current apprentice is coming to the end of his 12-month job and so the minister is looking for a new parliamentary apprentice in Westminster.

The programme combines on-the-job training working for Mr Hancock with a formal level three qualification in business and administration.

## Your comments on our big stories

### Beware the dangers of traineeship exploitation

It is important that those who organise work experience not only ensure it is good quality but can also clearly and independently demonstrate this.

If the sector does not take collective action to demonstrate quality now the easy option for employers in the face of adverse media and pressure group focus, will be to stop offering any work experience opportunities at all.

Stephen Gardner

### Apprentices paid below £2.65 an hour legal minimum jumps 45%

Which training providers or colleges are setting up apprenticeships with employers paying below the legal limit?

What action is the SFA taking?

Presumably, if nearly a third of apprentices are paid an illegal amount, it shouldn't be too difficult to identify some culprits?

Scott Upton

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Or, you can write to us at *FE Week*, 161-165 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 8JA.

Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by *FE Week* upon request.

*FE Week profile*

# Diana Laurillard ~ her story

*Rebecca Cooney*
*@RebeccaKCooney*

**The chair of the Association for Learning Technology talks to *FE Week*.**

Diana Laurillard, 65, is a woman on a mission. The Institute of Education's professor of learning with digital technologies wanted to be a university lecturer when she was a teenager and achieved that ambition by the time she was just 25 years old.

And, she concedes: "That's too soon to achieve your life's ambitions. You need to be older than that, certainly mid-forties at least, or it leaves you in a position where you've got to reinvent yourself and say 'who am I?' and find a new mission in life."

Fortunately, she didn't have long to wait. As a research assistant at Southampton University in the early 1970s, Laurillard was shocked by the abilities of her students.

"All these students had passed A-levels or equivalent in order to get on to the course, but they just didn't understand mathematics," she says.

"So that was the beginnings of a mission — how can you can go through all that teaching and learning, pass exams, but not understand maths and not love it?"

Laurillard's career seems to have been driven by this mission to improve teaching, first for her own students. While trying to help that initial class at Southampton, she stumbled upon some BBC resources for the Open University.

"I discovered they had some great television programmes on mathematics, where they used graphical computer simulations of, for example, the limit of theorems in four dimensional geometry — things that were really hard to understand," she says.

"They were really great, so I'd use them in lectures — but that got me interested in the idea of what you can do with computers and teaching."

Laurillard went to the university's computer department and asked if it could develop some simulations of its own.

"It was in the days of computing where you would hand a bunch of printed cards and paper tape for a program, then wait a week and it would come back with 'syntax error' or something," she explains.

"So asking 'could we please do some computer simulations?' was not a good question."

But, undeterred, Laurillard took a job with a national development programme for computer-assisted learning. It was a move down a career path that would lead to a pro-vice chancellor's post at the Open University and also one of civil servant.

"The way I thought about it was I would spend two years making simulations, then I'd be able to go back to my university and be the maths teacher I really wanted to be," she says.

"However, the world isn't like that and although we did create some great graphical simulations, we then got more and more into the business of saying 'how could we develop it further? How can we take it into other subjects?'

"So I never went back to teaching, I will do. When I retire one day, I'll do something like that."

Laurillard's love of maths stems from her childhood. "I was the kind of child who would do IQ tests for fun. I liked being the first one to finish in a class — I just enjoyed it so I did it naturally," she says.

But she does recall one instance when she struggled with maths, which has, she says, been important throughout her career.

"When I got to decimals, I couldn't make any sense of what they were saying," explains Laurillard.

"I realised the reason I was struggling so much was the metaphor I was taught of moving the decimal point when you multiply by 10. I thought 'why?' and there was no good answer.

"It's a very misleading metaphor, because the decimal point is the one thing that doesn't move, so it's sort of setting you off on the wrong track in how you model what's going on."

These teaching techniques, she says, are geared towards getting students to get the right answer to the question in front of them, rather than understand the underlying maths.

"You can see that time and again in the way kids talk about maths. They will parrot some rule without having a clue what they're talking about," she says.

"So that was a good experience for me, because most of the time in school I had no problem with it.

> "When I got to decimals, I couldn't make any sense of what they were saying"

"It's a problem for a maths teacher if you can't relate to the way your student is thinking — you've got to listen to the way the student talks about it."

The idea of listening and explaining is something Laurillard says she carried over to raising her own children Amy, aged 29, and Anna, 26.

"They're great arguers and this can be a problem, but our whole child-rearing process was about negotiation, making an argument for your case — we very rarely had to tell them what to do," she says, proudly.

Laurillard married Brian Butterworth, professor of cognitive neuropsychology and University College London, in 2010 — even though the couple have spent almost 46 years together.

"I never would have gone for marriage at all, because I distrusted it and disliked the whole thing," she says.

"I'm of that disposition — terribly unromantic," she says briskly.

"Every romantic film ends with marriage. If it begins with marriage, then it's a romantic comedy, or it's going to go wrong, or it's Doris Day and you can't aspire to that.

"And in the sixties, wives were effectively second-class citizens and I just thought 'no'.

"So we held out against marriage. It was fine as it was, thank you."

Finally, financial considerations and concerns about travelling eventually forced them to relent.

"There was this very romantic proposal from Brian," Laurillard says wryly.

"Something like 'Are you going to be free to pop into Camden registry office on your lunchbreak?'

"We really downplayed the whole thing — there were just the two girls and us and we cut out everything until the bare bones of it were left. It was hysterically funny — even the registrar was in hysterics. Then we went and had a slap-up meal and went back to work."

And with combined interests in math and psychology, the couple have collaborated on work studying dyscalculia — a learning difficulty similar to dyslexia where the sufferer struggles to understand numbers.

Butterworth studied the condition from a neuropsychology perspective, while Laurillard examined the education side of things. Her desire to solve problems in the classroom is probably derived from her love of maths and abstract problem solving, she says.

"I do have a sense that there is a right answer to the ways in which we change education, for instance, and, I think there's an essence to what's involved in enabling a learner to get the point about subtraction, for example," explains Laurillard.

"There's a way to do it and I've just got to discover what it is and work at it."


Photo by Nick Linford

## It's a personal thing

**What's your favourite book?**
The Tin Men by Michael Frayn

**What's your pet hate?**
Michael Gove

**If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead who would it be?**
Robert Louis Stevenson and Mark Twain, because although they're both novelists, it's their travel writings that are absolutely wonderful

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**
First, I wanted to be a vet, and then I wanted to be [1960s French nightclub singer] Juliet Gréco, because she was cool, very sexy and hung out with philosophers and I couldn't imagine anything better

**What do you do to switch off from work?**
Mostly family and friends allow me to do that — also walking and pilates

*FE Week experts*

# Preparing for increased maths teacher needs

**With government policy dictating that learners must work towards maths qualifications, new measures are needed to make sure there will be teachers in FE, explains Charlie Stripp.**



When I tell friends I work for an organisation that supports maths teachers, it quickly becomes clear to me most of them have an image limited to that of their secondary school teacher.

They do not seem to realise maths teaching — arguably the most important maths teaching — goes on in primary schools as well.

There isn't much recognition either that the FE sector also houses teachers who help students master the maths they need to confidently manipulate numbers that lie at the heart of engineering, business, computer programming and every other life pursuit.

Maths is hardly an optional extra in any modern society.

So, I welcome the requirement that, from this autumn, all those students who have not yet reached the GCSE grade C benchmark will have to continue studying the subject and work towards the goal of getting that GCSE.

I also recognise the scale of what this change implies.

> "Students re-sitting GCSE maths have often failed it more than once"

It will mean an additional 200,000-plus post-16 students with maths on their timetables, most of whom will be taught in FE.

This is not far short of a revolution in post-16 education.

And, of course, the crucial, immediate knock-on effect is the demand it is creating for more staff in FE capable of teaching GCSE maths.

We don't yet know exactly how many teachers will need to be recruited, or re-trained to meet this demand.

But early estimates are around the 1,000-mark.

So at the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, we are happy to support the FE sector in meeting this challenge.

We've already been working with the Department for Education, and 20 FE colleges, to develop materials to help existing teachers boost their current skills to allow them to teach GCSE maths.

These materials are at the heart of a continuing professional development programme, which will be starting soon, aimed principally at teachers of numeracy and functional skills, or teachers of other numerate/technical subjects, such as engineering or economics.

Over a six-month period, participants in this programme will have six days' face-to-face training, interspersed with personal, college-based tasks.

Throughout our preparatory work, we've tried to be sensitive to the expectations and prior experiences of the students these teachers will encounter.

Students re-sitting GCSE maths have often failed it more than once.

The last thing they need is more of the same, but faster.

Ideally, re-sitting will support them in understanding maths, so that they can use it effectively in their everyday life and work, rather than fearing it.

But who will run this continuing professional development programme?

Who will train, or re-train, this new, enhanced workforce?

Well, this is our bread and butter. We exist in large part to nurture, develop and support the professional development specialists who help all maths teachers augment their teaching skills throughout their careers.

So, we are running a course tailored for people with a maths-specific professional development role within FE, to equip them to lead the programme for groups of college-based teachers.

Along with the Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training, we are urgently talking to colleges to identify around 60 people to take part in the first of these "primer" courses.

I don't pretend the FE workforce can be transformed overnight, but by the end of this academic year, we hope we will have played our part in making substantial progress.

*Charlie Stripp, director of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics*

# Knee-jerk reaction to skills report would be damaging

**Figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development put England and Northern Ireland behind for numeracy and literacy, but they should not detract from policies already dealing with the issue, argues Martin Doel.**



This week's report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on adult skills has had a big impact.

It prompted front page headlines, ministerial interviews and outraged leader columns in broadsheet newspapers.

> "Yet again we're outclassed by the Japanese and the Finns. But is that really the case?"

The story that England and Northern Ireland has millions of adults with poor skills and that over 55-year-olds do better than under the 25-year-olds in this latest international test is compelling — shocking even — because it suggests there's been no education progress for 30 years.

Yet again we're outclassed by the Japanese and the Finns. But is that really the case?

This survey of adult skills is a major enterprise which has involved testing 170,000 adults across 20 countries in a project lasting three years.

No-one would want to argue with the thoroughness with which the research was put together, but I think care needs to be taken about over-interpreting the results.

OECD's weighty documents and data-rich presentations make some serious and compelling arguments for change, but they build these arguments on the basis of a one-hour test. Some 5,000 adults in England took the test, including people who now live here but were educated elsewhere.

Everyone taking the test was given three marks — for literacy, numeracy and problem solving — which range from 150 to 350 in all the countries which participated.

The average scores for most countries and most age groups in England clustered around the 260 to 280 mark.

The age, class and education gaps in England that OECD identifies and deplores are real, but it's also important not to exaggerate.

This is one set of key skills tests. We can and should do better, but we also need to stick with a course of action and avoid panic and any kind of knee-jerk reaction or political jockeying.OECD is a serious-minded, research-focused organisation with a mission.

Through its reports, tests and data, the OECD wishes to persuade governments and societies to set ambitious targets, link education and work, collect good data, foster lifetime learning and ensure no-one is left behind.

I don't think any of us working in FE would argue with any of these ambitions.

OECD recommendations accompany their reports and the presentations and are familiar because they're widely accepted across OECD's member countries and because, by and large, they're right.

For example, they call for targeted spending, especially for those who are disadvantaged, strong engagement between institutions and employers, good use of skills in the workplace and a culture of lifelong learning. These are things the Association of Colleges has long supported.

This week's report shines an uncomfortable spotlight on the English and maths skills of the population.

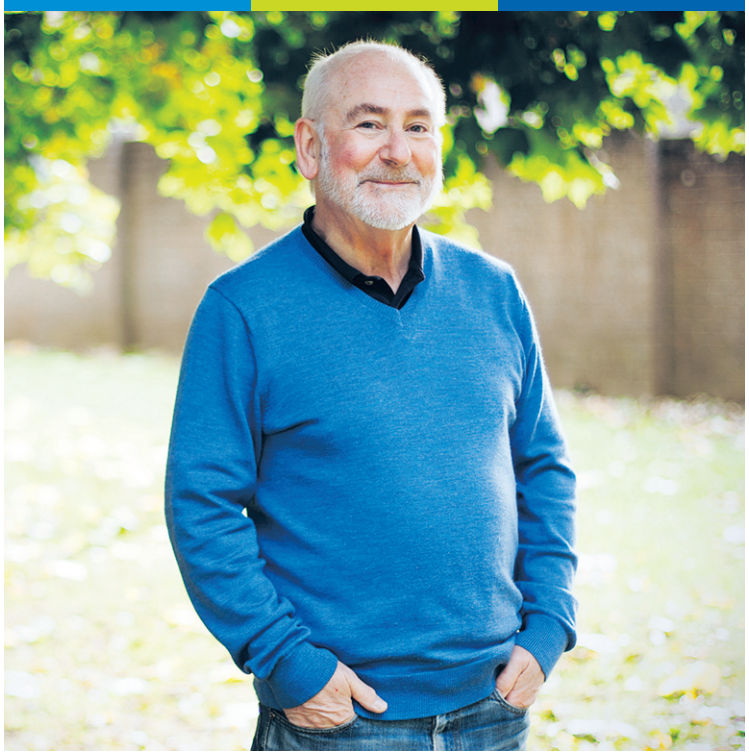
These are areas of acknowledged weakness. In fact, the government has already introduced a policy that students who do not achieve a C grade at GCSE in maths and English will have to continue to study those subjects.

Schools and colleges need to continue to work on core English and maths skills, while we should all listen to OECD's suggestion that learning is everyone's business and relatively fewer adults here keep learning than elsewhere.

Our collective task in response is to continue the improvements to teaching, teacher training, assessment and student engagement that will make the difference.

*Martin Doel, chief executive of the Association of Colleges*

How I became



**Colin Hall**
student support worker

# committed to making extraordinary students feel ordinary

**I know from personal experience how simple, everyday tasks can be huge hurdles for disabled people.**

Our late son was disabled – and he was the inspiration for my becoming a student support worker at a prestigious university in Scotland. As I see it, my job is to take away as many of these hurdles as I can, to give disabled students as 'normal' an experience of university life as possible. I take notes at lectures, return library books, even proof read essays the night before they're due in. (All students, disabled or not, work at the last minute…).

I have also helped many young people to overcome difficulties, encouraging them to believe in their own abilities and achieve all they are capable of. I'm so happy that Randstad helped me find this role. After all, we all have to have a sense that we're needed. But it's an important role in a wider sense too; any society that has pride in itself will help the more vulnerable people within it. That goes for the university, and for society as a whole.

Randstad Student Support has been working with further and higher education establishments since 2002 to help support students with disabilities. Improving student outcomes and helping them achieve their academic potential. We'd love your students to become part of the success story.

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*FE Week experts*

# Unemployment 'should not be an option' for 18 to 24s

**Learning for Life is the Liberal Democrats' policy paper for education and skills. Lady Brinton explains some of its key points.**



The Liberal Democrats believe education and skills are critical for both individual opportunity and the overall economic performance of the country.

Our new policy on this, which was recently passed at our conference, confirms our commitment to ending the twin track vocational/academic divide, and ensuring everyone has access to excellent education and training that is right for them, with clearly signposted pathways to different types and levels of learning.

Young people must get the best impartial information, advice and guidance on the options available, so we propose a streamlined and independent system to help students make the right choices, not just from 13, but starting in primary school.

Year 6 pupils should have a taste of FE and higher education, to give them a passion for their future lives before they transfer to secondary school.

> "We propose a cross-party commission to review the funding of re-skilling and lifelong learning"

We proposed free college meals for students up to 18 and want to extend the pupil premium in to FE for those receiving free lunches.

The student premium will allow a college to provide specific support for students, for both learning support and appropriate grants, to cover the costs of specific equipment and books.

These students will also be eligible for free or subsidised travel for those starting a full-time course before their 18th birthday.

We want all students up to 18 years old to continue to study literacy/numeracy, even if they have a GCSE at A* to C.

For those who find GCSEs difficult, we need more tailored literacy/numeracy courses to support their wider courses. This will mean more tutors will have to be trained and more tailored courses developed.

We believe unemployment should not be an option for 18 to 24-year-olds. We want a real focus of resources and energy on people from this age group who struggle to gain qualifications or sustainable jobs.

We will combine the funding spent on this group from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the youth justice system to provide them with individualised, concentrated and positive options in training, employment and support.

Never again should a student be pulled off a course with a key qualification by a Job Centre Plus adviser who decided it was time for them to have an interview, or a short term work contract.

We want to expand the number of quality apprenticeships and traineeships and want a real focus on small and medium-sized enterprises increasing the number of apprentices they take on.

We also want to expand the number of full-time two-year foundation degrees or HNDs in science, technology, engineering and maths subjects.

We expect much of this to be delivered in FE colleges as in the past.

Liberal Democrats see learning extending throughout life.

For those aged over 25, we want to see free tuition for a first level two, and income contingent loans for a first level three or four covering the full fee costs, and the full write-off of all fee level three loans for access courses where an adult progresses into higher education.

We propose a cross-party commission to review the funding of re-skilling and lifelong learning to look at arrangements for employer, individual and state contributions to training and arrangements for individual saving for learning, along with the possible creation of lifelong learning accounts.

Learning for Life recognises the excellence that exists in the FE sector, and we believe also develops that further and will bring true parity of esteem, giving every student a chance to get on in life.

*Lady Brinton*
*chair of the Liberal Democrats' education and skills policy working group*

# Much talk of reform, but plenty left unsaid in conference season

**Further education featured prominently among the policy proposals outlined by the three main political parties at the recent conferences. However, Lynne Sedgmore believes nothing was said on a number of key sector issues.**



The annual conference season has come to an end and aspects of FE featured strongly on their agendas.

We heard about free school meals from the Liberal Democrats and "earn or learn" policies from the Tories.

But on other aspects, there was a worrying silence.

As the political world gears up for the next election, it is important to reflect on where the last few weeks really leave us.

The 157 Group has published its own manifesto for FE and skills, calling for a shared vision, more stability in policy and funding and greater equity across the provider spectrum.

It seems clear, from comparisons with other education and training systems, that these three are prerequisites for success, and we trust that others across the sector will feel able to back our call.

There are signs we might see a less turbulent environment.

Conference discussions seem to reflect a growing consensus around some key policy themes — that traineeships and apprenticeships are the basis of successful vocational education and direct funding of employers will engage more of them in the system.

It is also agreed English and maths are essential for everyone.

> "As the political world gears up for the next election, it is important to reflect on where the last few weeks really leave us"

There is some comfort to be taken in the implication that a bedding down of current reforms will be given space by all three main parties.

We would suggest, however, there is something missing.

We have long argued colleges play a pivotal role in the skills system, yet none of the emerging manifestos recognise that. We are clear that full-time vocational education is valuable for many, but it is largely ignored.

We think it is important for employers to be engaged on a strategic level, but they shouldn't be bogged down in the detail of funding.

Colleges are responding to policy initiatives with gusto — for example by ensuring university technical colleges, studio schools and the like are successful, so they can serve as the engine rooms of employer ownership pilots and work hard to make a success of advanced learning loans.

However, this vital role — of the college as a valuable public asset — must be better acknowledged.

It is also revealing to look at what was not discussed during the season.

There was no challenge from any corner to the school reform agenda, nor any dissent from the push to give local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) more authority at local level.

There were no hints of a rethink on FE loans and no suspicion at all that structure of any of the government bodies for our sector (the split between the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, for instance) would be reviewed.

So, given all of that, I see an opportunity for colleges to be more vocal about how they are leading the way.

The 157 Group will continue to champion colleges for their strategic leadership within localities and their contribution to economic growth.

We will continue to press for true equity in the way all providers of post-14 education and training are held accountable, and, indeed, for that system to be increasingly sector-driven and owned.

With all the major parties agreed on some key policy elements, colleges will want to demonstrate their ability to lead the skills agenda by showing practically how to implement them.

Headline-grabbing announcements, whether on free meals or the possible loss of benefits or apprenticeships in exchange for foreign skilled workers, are not what is critical. Good working relationships with LEPs for example are.

*Lynne Sedgmore,*
*executive director of the 157 Group*

*FE Week experts*

# Planting and pruning course 'not for leisure'

**With Skills Minister Matthew Hancock wanting the 24+ Advanced Learning Loan System used to fund courses with a "direct line of sight to work," *FE Week* reported how loans were paying for apparently leisure-focussed courses. Among them was a level three certificate in horticulture that was for less than four hours a week. The report was wrong to say such a course might be leisure-focussed, according to David Henley.**

I am sorry to say the *FE Week* piece ('New Loans being used for Leisure') is a classic illustration of the prejudice and lack of understanding that, unfortunately, is often directed at land-based qualifications.

At Bicton College we are proud of the real difference we make to people's lives, providing new skills and work-related qualifications across a wide range of land-based industries.

Last year our work was inspected by Ofsted and we were graded as good in all fields [including headline and sub fields] and over 80 per cent of our students progress on to careers or additional training leading to their chosen profession. I would suggest this is a statistic that many colleges or training providers would be delighted with.

My main contention with the *FE Week* piece is that to suggest that the land-based courses cited are akin to leisure subjects is misinformed at best and, frankly, insulting at worst.

The horticulture industry is big business, contributing an estimated £9bn to the UK economy each year (Horticulture Matters, RHS report, 2013).

> "Like all colleges, we don't make the rules regarding fundable qualifications or loans. We just follow them to provide all our learners with the best opportunities that we can"

The industry needs an estimated 11,000 new entrants in the next decade to satisfy skills needs within the sector.

Well-trained horticulturalists can and do earn good money in landscape design, grounds



and gardens maintenance, crop production, plant breeding and in the South West are in as much demand as a good plumber.

Our course supports people who are in the industry or want to get in to it and it provides the practical skills necessary to do the job — it is not designed for people to have fun, although, as with any good course, students do enjoy it.

Similarly, the slur directed at creative craft courses is also misdirected and obviously carelessly made.

We support adult students, often women returners, whose creative talents are released and inspired by our passionate teachers.

Many go on to start their own businesses and make a worthwhile contribution to the rural economy.

The current students have multiple motivations, but the skills they are learning are valued by people living and working in the rural economy.

Like all colleges, we don't make the rules regarding fundable qualifications or loans.

We just follow them to provide all our learners with the best opportunities that we can. Although early days, our initial small allocation for loans has been exceeded and we expect that demand for loans will continue to increase as learners assess the benefit of achieving a career change or increasing their employability versus the cost of the loan.

And we don't discriminate. We cater for young and mature learners alike, men and women, and the vast majority of our learners across all subjects progress into useful careers.

As a final point, [*FE Week* editor] Nick Linford's tweet seems to imply that the article was prompted by a throwaway remark made by a principal in a meeting of colleges. Without being rude, one would think that serious journalism would warrant a little more careful research.

*David Henley, principal, Bicton College in Devon*



# What happens when the money runs out?

**With allegations of shoddy practice, revelations of low pay and little training for apprentices, along with concerns about limited government cash being spent on 'leisure' courses, Ian Nash questions whether the FE and skills sector has moved on at all in the last 20 years.**

The National Audit Office (NAO) review of the Education Funding Agency's work in its first 18 months is unlikely to make happy reading for the government when published.

Concerns are understood to run far deeper than the alleged £20m overpaid to private training providers last year.

The issue is less about the agency's approach than whether reforms required by ministers are fit for purpose. Indeed, sources suggest a benign view of the agency.

The question is whether this is symptomatic of a deeper malaise — are other things going wrong in FE and skills?

Without being unduly pessimistic, there is a horrible sense of déjà vu — a danger of repeating mistakes made by the Tories post-1992 Further and Higher Education Act, and Labour in its third term. And ministers need to take stock if not action to avoid this.

First, we have allegations of shoddy practice at training provider Elmfield, highlighted on BBC Newsnight.

Second, while ministers launched the Richard Review of Apprenticeships and promised immediate improvements, with only new starts counting as apprenticeships, what do we find? The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [BIS] report Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2012: Research Findings shows 29 per cent of apprentices on less than the minimum wage.

It also shows 20 per cent receiving neither on or off-the-job training, 30 per cent having no off-the-job learning and 70 per cent having worked for their existing employer for a year before taking up the apprenticeship. The survey reports little or no improvement on the past.

Third, there is a rerun of the row over distinctions between funding recreational and work-skills training emerging.

An *FE Week* report suggested 24+ advanced learning loans were being taken out for courses outside limits of skills training envisaged by ministers.

While Bicton College insisted its horticulture course was about reskilling and was not just leisure-focused, others privately admit there are deep problems in defining courses either way.

> "Beyond what is defined as 'skills' or 'leisure' what happens when the money runs out and we still lack essential skills?"

Fourth, beyond the question of what is appropriately defined as being for 'skills' or 'leisure' what happens when the money runs out and we still lack essential skills?

Funding constraint after funding constraint (such as the demand-led element) has fallen foul here over two decades. What appears to be happening is that those least in need of loans are most likely to take them, while the least skilled remain least skilled.

Fifth, we now have much confusion over where funding is actually going and the suggestion that apprenticeship courses for 16 to 19-year-olds could carry fees while money appears to be being diverted to post-19 training.

Again, this emerged out of an *FE Week* webinar and story.

Last week Skills Minister Matthew Hancock said there was £20m more for traineeships and BIS confirmed, "it would not apply to 16 to 18-year-olds". But, as *FE Week* editor Nick Linford, pointed out, "There is no separate pot for 19+ traineeships. So it disappears?"

Among quite a few college leaders I subsequently spoke to the confusion is leading to deep cynicism as they say ministers and the Skills Funding Agency "are taking it out with one hand and putting it back with the other" without any clear means of tracking apparent spending or being accountable for where the money does or doesn't go.

Again, we have been here before with Tories and Labour massaging figures and double-accounting.

The alarm bells are not ringing as yet, but there is a need for a clear and measured response by ministers before they do, particularly as the deepest austerity cuts are yet to come.

*Ian Nash is a partner in Nash & Jones Partnership and a member of the Policy Consortium*

# It's farewell to Marsden as Hunt rises to the top in Labour reshuffle

*Rebecca Cooney*

*@RebeccaKCooney*

Former Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden has paid tribute to his old FE sector stomping ground, describing it as his "passion".

Mr Marsden, who has joined the shadow team for transport following last week's ministerial reshuffle, said his new position would be "an interesting place" with "all sort of fascinating things going on".

"However, I also have enormously enjoyed and am very sad to be leaving the area of FE and skills and lifelong learning," he said.

"To me this job hasn't just been a wonderful job to be given it has also been a passion."

Mr Marsden held the shadow skills position since the 2010 General Election, having previously served on House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Select Committee and before that the Education and Skills Select Committee.

"Most of my life inside and out of politics has been concerned with education and life chances and those issues," he said.

"So it has been a double bonus to do a job that is fascinating, with some wonderful people but also to do it in an area that I feel strongly about."

He added that he had been "richly blessed" by the "warmth and support" of his colleagues.

He said: "I've simply been heartened week by week in meeting all the individuals in FE and skills and without whom I couldn't have done half what I've tried to do."

Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel said Mr Marsden had been a "fantastic" Shadow Skills Minister, whose "passion for the work of colleges has been evident".

He highlighted Mr Marsden's work in ensuring access to higher education students would not have to pay back advanced learning loans if they went on university — something Mr Marsden said was one of his proudest achievements in the role.

Mr Doel also praised Mr Marsden's campaign to ensure students on 'inactive' benefits were able to access FE, particularly those taking ESOL courses.

Toni Pearce, president of the National Union of Students, said: "Mr Marsden's support for numerous campaigns has been very much appreciated. It has been great to work with him, and we wish him the very best for his new role."

Deputy executive director of the 157 Group Christine Doubleday said the organisation had "always held Gordon in very high regard" and praised his "wealth of experience and passion for FE".

She added: "We do of course wish him all the best and look forward to working with Labour's new skills team."

Association for Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Stewart Segal said: "Gordon has always taken a keen interest in the views of independent training providers… and we are very grateful for the substantial contribution he has made in maintaining the profile of FE and skills at Westminster."

Jill Stokoe, education policy adviser at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, also praised Mr Marsden's "energy and passion" for the role, particularly his commitment to apprenticeships.



Reshuffling the Labour pack. From left: Tristram Hunt, Rushanara Ali and Liam Byrne



Hosting one of a number of FE Week debates at the Houses of Parliament




At FE Week HQ for a roundtable on FE loans



Hosting an FE Week debate on apprenticeship funding reform

## New FE faces for Labour

The new Labour FE faces are Liam Byrne, who takes Gordon Marsden's place, and Rushanara Ali, who takes Tristram Hunt's role.

*FE Week* would like to welcome them to the wonderful world of FE and congratulate Mr Hunt on his promotion to Shadow Education Secretary.

Mr Byrne has experienced a range of government and shadow ministerial roles. His own post-16 education includes studying A-levels at The Hertfordshire and Essex High School, in Bishop's Stortford.

Ms Ali attended Tower Hamlets College, which she has credited with much of her success.

Mr Hunt meanwhile, who takes over from Stephen Twigg, is no stranger to *FE Week*, and our profile of him, along with a recent interview on Labour's plans for the future can be found on the *FE Week* website.



Tristram Hunt interviewed by *FE Week* editor Nick Linford



**TRISTRAM HUNT**
Shadow Secretary of State for Education

MP for Stoke-on-Trent and formerly Shadow Junior Education Minister



**RUSHANARA ALI**
Shadow Minister for Young People

MP for Bethnal Green and Bow. Has previously worked in the Foreign Office



**LIAM BYRNE**
Shadow Minister for Skills and Enterprise

Previous roles include Chief Secretary to the Treasury

# FE WEEK & ME
## Photography Competition 2013

**Encourage your learners to email FE Week a photograph that represents college or apprentice life for them to be in with a chance of winning an amazing prize!**




## INFO

A selection of submissions will be published in the *FE Week* newspaper and online.

Email one entry by 5pm on 18th October 2013 to **feweekandme@feweek.co.uk,** including contact details and the name your course and college.

Our readers will vote for the winner, which will be announced on 3rd November 2013.

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# FE Week campus round-up


Man Thapa with one of his culinary creations

## Man, son of Gurkha, gets best young chef award

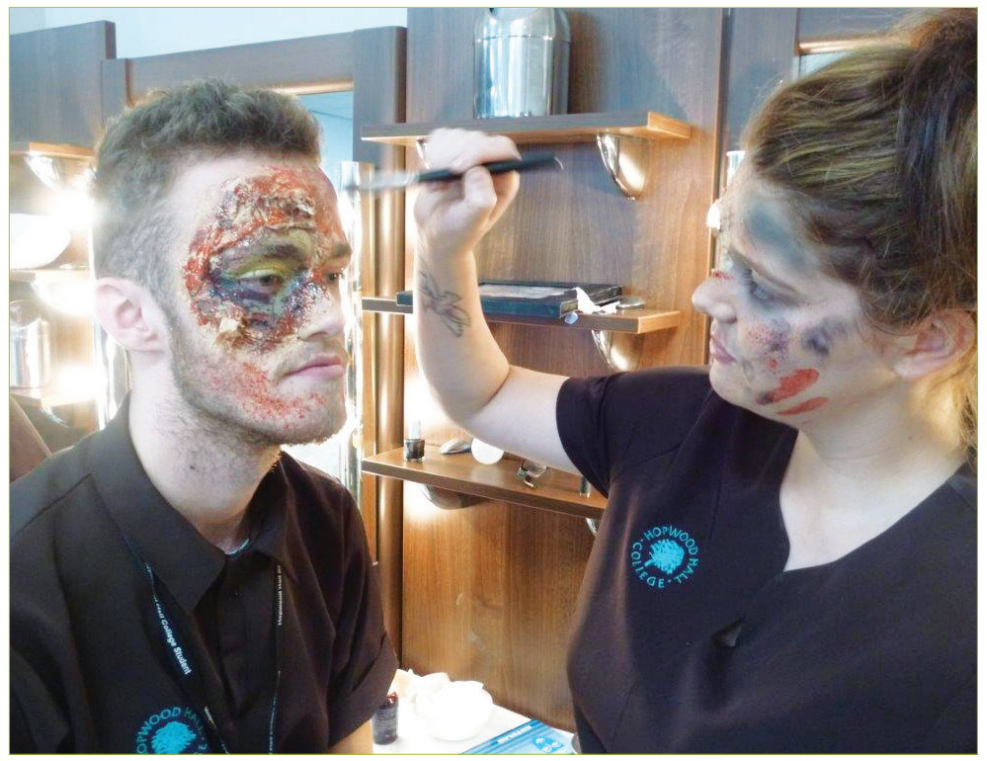
A catering student from the mountains of Nepal has scaled new heights by proving he is the best young chef in North East England.

Darlington College NVQ level three catering and hospitality student Man Thapa scooped first prize in an inter-college competition involving trainees from all over the north east.

The 20-year-old, who is originally from Bokhara, in Nepal, moved to Darlington three-and-a-half years ago, when his father retired from the Gurkhas.

Man captured the judges' attention with his chicken chasseur, which he had just 90 minutes to prepare.

He said his dream was to one day become head chef in a top London hotel.


James Wood and Natasha Riezzo, both 19, work on their living dead looks

## Horror show at Farm of Terror event

Halloween arrived early for media make-up students in Lancashire who have been helping a farmer plan his annual spooky attraction.

Eighteen Hopwood Hall VRQ level three students will create all of the gory special effects make-up for Terry Bork's Farm of Terror event.

Student Lauron Stirrup, aged 28, said: "We are super excited and can't wait to start our work experience. It's going to be amazing."

This will be the fourth year Terry has run the event. He said: "It's going to be the biggest yet.

"These students are the most enthusiastic we have ever seen and we can't wait to see what make-up they produce."

## Added value from trainee teachers



The first cohort of FE English and maths teachers-in-training at Reading's new academy

It was back to the classroom for a group of budding teachers, who are already helping FE students improve at maths and English.

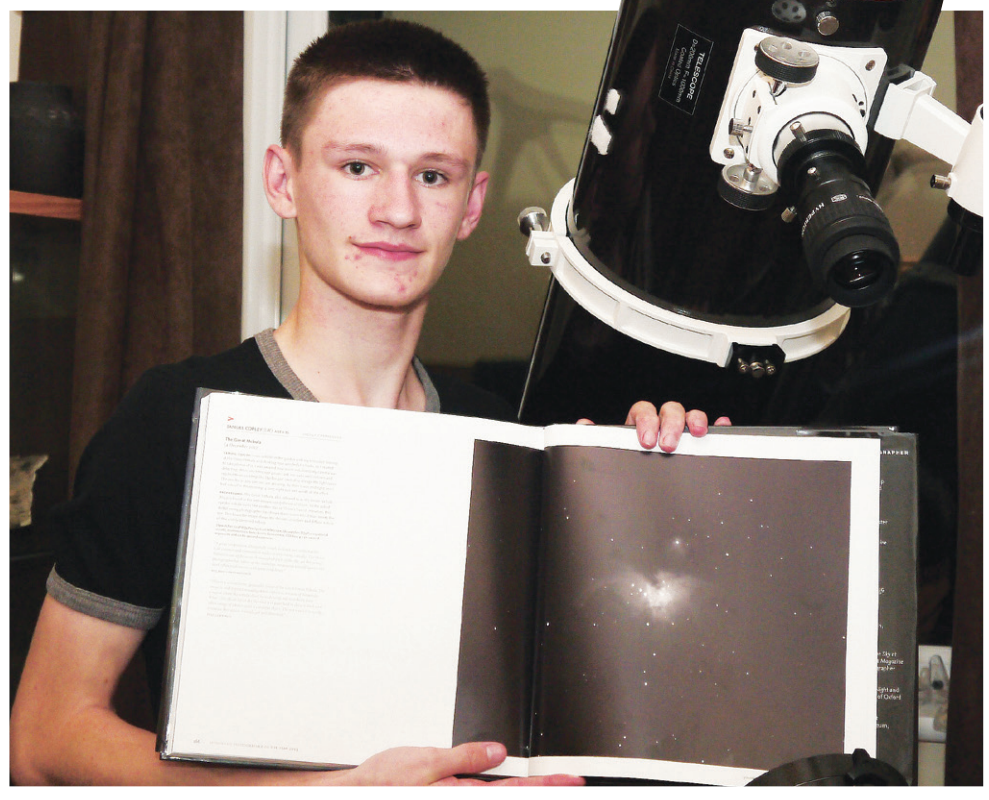
Twelve people have started teacher-training courses at Canterbury College Teaching Academy. They all hope to become GCSE maths and English teachers in the FE sector.

As part of the course, they are helping teach numeracy and literacy skills to students who are studying other subjects at the college, but only achieved a D grade or less in GCSE maths and English.

Former estate agency accounts manager Victoria Dagg, 26, who is retraining as a maths teacher, said: "I've sat in on lessons and have even taken charge of some for short periods."

Students who did not achieve A to C in maths and English GCSE must now study them alongside their college courses, under new government rules.

## Samuel's out-of-this-world photography of Great Nubula


Samuel Copley with his prize-winning picture and telescope

A rising star shone in an international astronomy photographer of year competition, clinching third place for his photo of the Great Nubula.

MidKent College student Samuel Copley, aged 16, from Hoo, Kent, was highly commended in his age group and won £125.

He produced an image of the cloud of gas and dust to the south of the Orion's Belt constellation.

Samuel said: "I would like to be a professional astronomy photographer but you can't really make a living out of it.

"It's more of a hobby-turned-obsession for me so I was very proud to be highly commended in the competition."



Former South Cheshire College student Lydia Birch-Hampson, 20, gives a make-over to current student Ellie Mort, 16

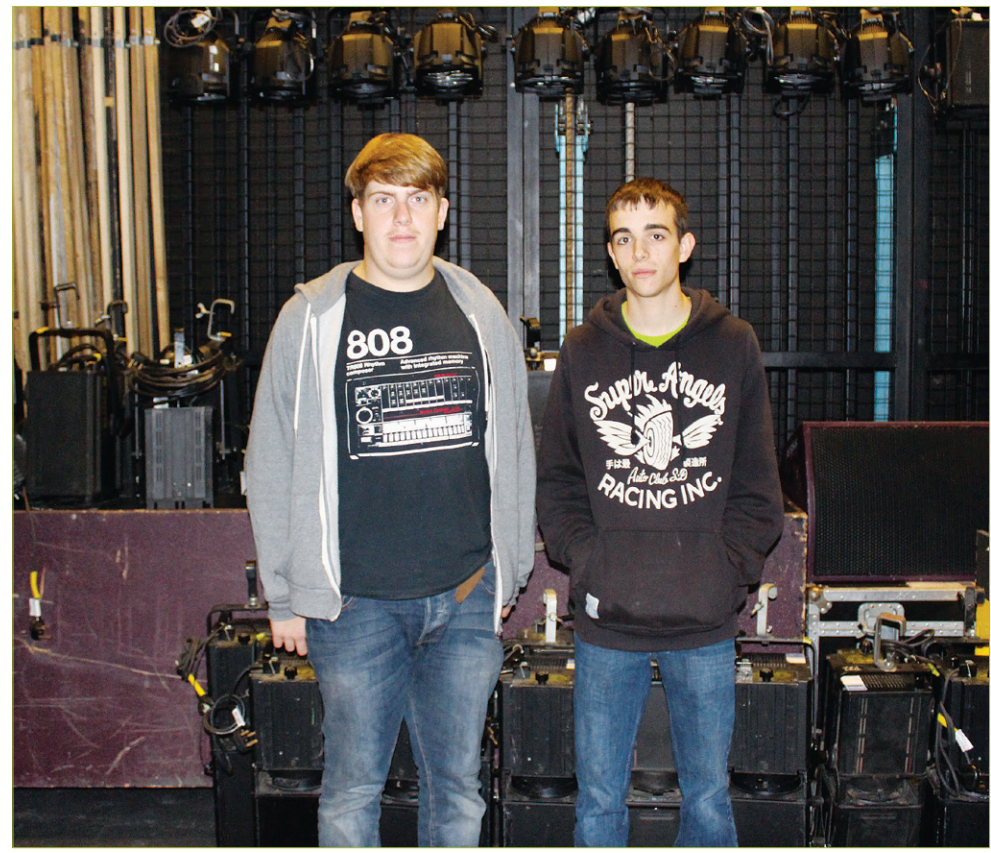
# Students are made up with visit from Lydia

A make-up specialist returned to her college to explain how she laid the foundation of her career.

Lydia Birch-Hampson studied level two and three beauty therapy at South Cheshire College and now works as a product specialist for Chester-based Mac make-up.

She said: "I've had a fantastic time after completing my college course and looking back I really appreciate what I learned at college because it has stood me in good stead." Lydia has also used her skills at national events such as London Fashion Week and the show Dancing on Ice. She added: "Hopefully, they found the demonstrations and talk interesting. I told students the make-up industry is massively competitive, but it's also very rewarding."

Beauty and make-up lecturer Maxine Smith said: "Visits like this from former students inspire our current students to set their sights high."




Charlie Howsego and Alex Allen

# Northbrook youngsters light up sessions

A West Sussex duo were in the spotlight as they designed the lighting for a promotional video for a group of session musicians.

Northbrook College theatre production students Charlie Howsego and Alex Allen worked on a live remix of Beyoncé's Crazy in Love and the Beastie Boys' Intergalactic.

Session guitarist Oli Corrigan, who has worked with Jessie J, said: "I can't commend the students that worked with us enough.

"Both Alex and Charlie were in full control of the lighting setup we used for the video. They were fantastic team players and worked extremely well with our video production team.

"Charlie and Alex also had some excellent suggestions which were used in the video and they really contributed." The video, Beyonce and Beastie Boys Live Band Remix HD, has had more than 110,000 YouTube views.

# Coffee morning for cancer research




Hospitality and catering students David Rozanski and Karolina Szynter, both 17, selling cakes at the event

Staff and students raised more than £500 for charity through a cake-filled coffee morning at their college.

Doncaster College level two and three catering students ran the event at the college's Waterfront restaurant, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Contributions to a tombola, cake stalls, along with sweets-in-a-jar and guess-the-name competitions were organised by catering, travel and business students.

Jane Fishwick, assistant director for hospitality, travel, business and accounting said: "We chose Macmillan due to the number of lives affected by cancer.

"We have had two young learners affected in the past two years, as well as lots of family members across the staff and students. Both these students are doing well currently."



The award-winnin Birmingham Metropolitan College footbll team

# Footballers score with sports award

College student footballers have been named Under 19 Team of the Year at the inaugural Birmingham Sports Awards 2013, following a season of trophy success.

The Birmingham Metropolitan College team were unbeaten in their last nine games and scored a hat-trick of wins, becoming West Midlands County Cup Winners, Three County League Champions and National seven-a-side champions.

Team coach Nick Heath said: "We're all really proud of this award because it recognises the achievements of our 18 players over the last 12 months.

"Week after week, the team demonstrated a desire to play at the highest level and their hard work continued to pay off."

# FE Week campus round-up



From left: Judith Doyle, principal of Gateshead College; Samantha Pritchard, solicitor at Bond Dickinson, Gavin Prior, general manager at INTU Metrocentre, Lesley Kerrison, commercial director at Metro Radio and A-level students Tom Peacock and Tammy Farrer

## Good advice from business leaders

Students in Newcastle quizzed business leaders about the skills they need to get a job.

Gateshead College youngsters met with employers at a two-day event as part of the college's Work Ready campaign designed to tackle the area's 10.4 per cent unemployment rate.

A-level student Tammy Farrer, aged 16, said: "This event has been a great introduction to the world of work.

"I now understand that employers are not just looking for academic achievements. They want to see evidence of other skills gained through, for example, voluntary work or a part-time job."

Principal Judith Doyle said: "It's vital that young people are better equipped with transferable skills and attributes that will help them find work."

## Girls are brightest engineering sparks



Award winners Emily French, aged 19, Georgina Ireland, 23, Hannah Carr, 21, and Kelsey Richardson, 18

Engineering bright sparks were recognised at their college's annual engineering awards ceremony, with female learners shining particularly brightly.

Of 11 categories at the Hartlepool College ceremony, eight were won by girls, with Kelsey Richardson and Georgina Ireland taking two each, Hannah Carr, winning one and Emily French winning three, including overall engineering student of the year.

Principal Darren Hankey said: "Each winner is a credit to the staff who steered them through their qualifications and their family and friends who gave them the support they needed. It's excellent to see female learners following engineering courses and I'm sure Kelsey, Emily and Georgina will be an inspiration to other female learners who may wish to follow a similar route."

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



Jodie Matthews in her skydive for critically-ill newborn babies

## Jodie takes a dive for critically-ill tots

A health and social care student raised more than £1,100 with a skydive to provide equipment for critically-ill newborn babies.

Farnborough College of Technology student Jodie Matthews, aged 17, took the plunge for Frimley Park Hospital's Saving Tiny lives Appeal.

She said: "The money raised was for my local hospital so it was a cause I was particularly interested in.

"It's always nice to give something back to the community and challenge yourself at the same time. It was an amazing experience."

Health and social care programme manager Lesley Harden said: "Jodie really is an excellent example of a student who is doing something inspirational for other people."

## Children sitting comfortably for story time



Wigan and Leigh College tutor Colin Higham with the primary school student council

Carpenters from the North arrived like knights in shining armour to rescue schoolchildren from boring story-times by creating fairytale-inspired outdoor furniture.

The carpentry and joinery students from Wigan & Leigh College designed eight pieces of bespoke furniture, including a throne, for pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, in Wrightington.

Yvonne Barber, college divisional manager for construction crafts, said: "The students worked really hard to create furniture that they can really be proud of."

Louise Cherry, the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association member who initially contacted the college, said: "The furniture is perfect. The children really love it and are looking forward to using it more."

# Crumbling orangery gets huge facelift from stone students

FEATURED CAMPUS ROUND-UP



This is the impressive handiwork of stone conservation students who restored a crumbling Victorian ruin to its former glory as an orangery, writes Rebecca Cooney.

These pictures show how the the Grade II*-listed building in the Tyntesfield Esate, North Somerset, built in 1897 to house exotic plants, was saved by City of Bath College NVQ level three learners.

The National Trust, which owns the estate, invited students to help save the building, repairing mortar and fitting new pieces of stonework.

Course leader Nigel Bryant said: "It was the worst building I've seen in 30 years — I think it was a challenge the students enjoyed very much.

"There was serious decay with water penetration, vegetation growth, and whole sections eroded away, they just weren't there anymore.

"It's an opportunity to put their training into practice, to work with industry and to put in a piece of history.

"It's giving back buildings and monuments back to the public so they can be reused and enjoyed again."

The course has been shortlisted for an Association of Colleges Beacon award in recognition of the students' efforts and the winners will be announced at the association conference in November.







## MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving



Zoe Lewis



Karen Spencer



Paula Whittle

Middlesbrough College has its first female principal in Zoe Lewis.

The mum-of-two stepped up from deputy principal, after previous boss Mike Hopkins was appointed chief executive of a newly-formed confederation between Middlesbrough and Gateshead College.

She was last year voted the most inspirational female leader in the country in FE, by the Women's Leadership Network.

She said: "It's a really exciting time for Middlesbrough College and I couldn't work with a more dedicated, committed and talented team."

Meanwhile, Harlow College's interim principal, Dr Elaine McMahon CBE, has been succeeded by Karen Spencer.

Mrs Spencer joined last month, having previously been vice principal at Kingston College, in Surrey.

"I'm passionate about how you can enrich the student's whole experience and want to develop some really lively enrichment programmes," said the mum-of-two.

Finally, Paula Whittle, principal of Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College, has announced plans to retire in March after five years in post.

Her previous roles include Ofsted inspector and Barnsley College principal.

She said: "It has been a pleasure to work with such a talented team of education professionals.

"I will take fond memories away of their passion and dedication to learners at one of the country's largest education institutions.

"We will continue working to deliver the best opportunities for our learners and I have no doubt this college will rise to whatever challenges the future presents."

The search for a new principal is ongoing.

See page 7 for an expert piece

**If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college or training provider, please let us know by emailing news@feweek.co.uk**

# Jobs

## Business Development Officer South East

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**Permanent contract (London, East Anglia, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire)**

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Confidence and personality are important and you must be target driven with the desire to create opportunities and maximise sales growth. Due to the nature of the role, a full driving licence is also essential.

**Closing Date: 20 October 2013**
First Stage Interviews: 28 October 2013 (London)
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**ABOUT YOU**
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HOT NEWS FE Week ANALYSIS AND JOBS

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- Fostering a passion for learning across the Land Based Industries
- Ensuring the clarity and effectiveness in design, delivery and management of quality learning programmes
- Leading and managing the curriculum ensuring key priorities of raising standards, increasing inclusion and the provision of cost effective programmes
- Ensuring our students receive a high quality, dynamic and challenging learning experience with a high level of added value
- Engagement and raising our profile within rural industries and communities

If you are looking for a rewarding new challenge and have the relevant experience and qualifications we would be delighted to hear from you.

**Closing Date for all posts: Friday 25th October 2013**
Selection will take place across two days at our Kirkley Hall Campus on dates to be confirmed.

All appointments are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure check or similar. For full details, including how to apply, please visit our website.

**www.northumberland.ac.uk**
Should you not have access to the internet, please call our 24hr recruitment line on 01670 841 286.
College Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9RG

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**Closing date: Wednesday 30 October 2013 (12 noon)**

The selection process will take place from 12 to 14 November 2013.

South Cheshire College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will be required to provide a DBS Disclosure.

South Cheshire College

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## *FE Week* Sudoku challenge

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | 7 | | | | 8 | | |
| | | 6 | | 4 | 5 | | | 2 |
| | 1 | | | | | | 6 | |
| | | | 1 | 3 | | | 8 | |
| 3 | | 2 | | | | 7 | | 6 |
| | 8 | | | 5 | 6 | | | |
| | 6 | | | 1 | | | 4 | |
| 7 | | | 8 | 9 | | 6 | | |
| | | 1 | | | | 3 | 2 | |

**Difficulty:**
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8 | | | 4 | 5 | 2 | |
| 7 | | 4 | | 2 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | 7 | | | 1 | 3 |
| 9 | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | 7 | | | | 1 | 6 | |
| | | | | | | | | 9 |
| 4 | 5 | | | 6 | | | | 1 |
| | | | | 3 | | 6 | | 5 |
| | 7 | 9 | 2 | | | 8 | | |

**Difficulty:**
**MEDIUM**

### Last Week's solutions

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 1 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 9 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 |

**Difficulty:**
**EASY**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| 7 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 5 |
| 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| 5 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 4 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| 9 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 4 |

**Difficulty:**
**MEDIUM**

## *FE Week* mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



*"Mostly this week I've been helping baby Tom pick conkers"*

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford